EPI Update for Friday, July 8, 2011 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) lowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- Food safety at farmers' markets
- Rinderpest historical significance Part II
- Ten greatest achievements in public health
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Food safety at farmers' markets

While many farmers' markets have their own food safety rules in addition to any applicable government regulations, there are also some basic food safety guidelines that consumers should follow to ensure they handle farm-fresh foods safely. Please share the following guidelines with patients and staff who visit farmers' markets.

Produce

- Wash your hands before preparing fruits and vegetables
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting or cooking
- Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating, it is still important to wash it first
- Refrigerate cut or peeled fruits and vegetables within two hours after preparation Juices and ciders
 - Ensure that juices or ciders have been treated (pasteurized) to kill harmful bacteria before consuming them

Dairy products

- Ensure that dairy products (such as milk) have been pasteurized. Raw milk can harbor dangerous microorganisms, such as *Campylobacter, Salmonella*, *E. coli*, and *Listeria*
- Pregnant women, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for developing severe illness

Eggs

- Ensure that eggs have been properly chilled at the market
- Before buying eggs, open the carton and make sure that the eggs are clean and the shells are not cracked

Meat

- Ensure that meat has been properly chilled at the market
- Bring an insulated bag or cooler with you to the market to keep meat cool on the way home
- Be sure to keep meat separate from your other purchases, so that the juices from the raw meat do not come in contact with produce and other foods

Rinderpest historical significance – Part II

The recent announcement that "cattle plague" has been eradicated has great historical significance. The disease was associated with many major events throughout history, including widespread deaths of cattle that resulted in the starvation of the Roman Empire during fourth century invasions. Experts also believe that Mongol armies brought the disease into Europe through their oxen as they invaded Eurasia during the 1200s. There is some evidence that these oxen were innately resistant to the highly contagious virus they shed, making rinderpest the first agro-biological weapon used against agriculture. Despite its proximity to Eurasia, significant presence of the disease did not reach Africa until the 1880s when the Italian army imported Indian cattle for food. Within a decade, the disease spread to South Africa, and is considered one of the key factors in famines throughout Africa.

Ten greatest achievements in public health

Achievement #6 – Cardiovascular disease prevention

During the past decade, the age-adjusted coronary heart disease and stroke death rates declined from 195 to 126 per 100,000 population and from 61.6 to 42.2 per 100,000 population, respectively, continuing a trend that started in the 1900s for stroke and in the 1960s for coronary heart disease. Factors contributing to these reductions include declines in the prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors such as uncontrolled hypertension, elevated cholesterol, and smoking; and improvements in treatments, medications, and quality of care.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Have a healthy, happy week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology lowa Department of Public Health 800-362-2736